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PREPARATIONS FOR THE UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT ON THE BASIS OF GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 44/228 AND TAKING INTO ACCOUNT OTHER RELEVANT GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTIONS: CROSS-SECTORAL ISSUES

National mechanisms and international cooperation for capacity-building

(Section IV, Chapter 5 of Agenda 21)

Text submitted by the Chairman on the basis of negotiations held on document A/CONF.151/PC/100/Add.11

Basis for action

1. The ability of a country to follow sustainable development paths is determined to a large extent by the capacity of its people and its institutions as well as by its ecological and geographical conditions. Specifically, capacity-building encompasses the country's human, scientific, technological, organizational, institutional and resource capabilities. A fundamental goal of capacity-building is to enhance the ability to evaluate and address the crucial questions related to policy choices and modes of implementation among development options, based on an understanding of environmental potentials and limits and of needs as perceived by the people of the country concerned. As a result, the need to strengthen national capacities is shared by all countries.

2. Building endogenous capacity to implement Agenda 21 will require the efforts of the countries themselves in partnership with relevant United Nations organizations, as well as with developed countries. The international community at the national, subregional and regional levels, municipalities, non-governmental organizations, universities and research centres, and business and other private institutions and organizations could also assist in these efforts. It is essential for individual countries to identify priorities and determine the means for building capacity and capability to implement Agenda 21, taking into account their environmental and economic needs. Skills, knowledge and technical know-how at the individual and institutional levels are necessary for institution-building, policy analysis and development management, including the assessment of alternative courses of action with a view to enhancing access to and tranfer of technology and promoting economic development. Technical cooperation, including that related to technology transfer and know-how, encompasses the whole range of activities to develop or strengthen individual and group capacities and capabilities. It should serve the purpose of long-term capacity-building and needs to be managed and coordinated by the countries themselves. Technical cooperation, including that related to technology transfer and know-how, is effective only when it is derived from and related to a country's own strategies and priorities on environment and development and when development agencies and Governments define improved and consistent policies and procedures to support this process.

Objectives

3. The overall objectives of endogenous capacity-building in this programme area are to develop and improve national and related subregional and regional capacities and capabilities for sustainable development, with the involvement of the non-governmental sectors. The programme should assist by:

(a) Promoting an ongoing participatory process to define country needs and priorities in promoting Agenda 21 and to give importance to technical and professional human resource development and development of institutional capacities and capabilities on the agenda of countries, with due recognition of the potential for optimal use of existing human resources as well as enhancement of the efficiency of existing institutions, and non-governmental organizations including scientific and technological institutions;

(b) Reorienting and reprioritizing technical cooperation including that related to technology transfer and know-how process with due attention to the specific conditions and individual needs of recipients, while improving coordination among providers of assistance to support countries' own programmes of action. This coordination should also include non-governmental organizations and scientific and technological institutions, as well as business and industry whenever appropriate;

(c) Shifting time horizons in programme planning and implementation addressing the developing and strengthening of institutional structures to enhance their ability to respond to new longer-term challenges rather than concentrate only on immediate problems;

(d) Improving and reorienting existing international multilateral institutions with responsibilities for environment and/or development matters to ensure that those institutions have the capability and capacity to integrate environment and development;

(e) Improving institutional capacity and capability, both public and private, in order to evaluate the environmental impact of all development projects.

4. Specific objectives include the following:

(a) Each country should aim to complete, as soon as practicable, if possible by 1994, a review of capacity- and capability-building requirements for devising national sustainable development strategies, including those for generating and implementing its own Agenda 21 action programme;

(b) By 1997, the Secretary-General of the United Nations should submit to the General Assembly a report on achievement of improved policies, coordination systems and procedures for strengthening the implementation of technical cooperation programmes for sustainable development, as well as on additional measures required to strengthen such cooperation. That report should be prepared on the basis of information provided by countries, international organizations, environment and development institutions, donor agencies and non-governmental partners.

Activities

Build a national consensus and formulate capacity-building strategies for implementing Agenda 21

5. As an important aspect of overall planning, each country should seek internal consensus at all levels of society on policies and programmes needed for short- and long-term capacity-building to implement its Agenda 21 programme. This consensus should result from a participatory dialogue of relevant interest groups and lead to an identification of skill gaps, institutional capacities and capabilities, technological and scientific requirements and resource needs to enhance environmental knowledge and administration to integrate environment and development. The United Nations Development Programme in partnership with relevant specialized agencies and other international intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations could assist, upon request of Governments, in the identification of the requirements for technical cooperation including those related to technology transfer and know-how and development assistance for the implementation of Agenda 21. The national planning process together, where appropriate, with national sustainable development action plans or strategies should provide the framework for such cooperation and assistance. The United Nations Development Programme should use and further improve its network of field offices and its broad mandate to assist, using its experience in the field of technical cooperation for facilitating capacity-building at the country and regional levels and making full use of the expertise of other bodies, in particular the

United Nations Environment Programme, the World Bank and regional commissions and development banks, as well as relevant international intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations.

Identify national sources and present requests for technical cooperation, including that related to technology transfer and know-how in the framework of sector strategies

6. Countries desiring arrangements for technical cooperation, including that related to technology transfer and know-how, with international organizations and donor institutions should formulate requests in the framework of long-term sector or subsector capacity-building strategies. Strategies should, as appropriate, address policy adjustments to be implemented, budgetary issues, cooperation and coordination among institutions, human resource requirements, and technology and scientific equipment requirements. They should cover public and private sector needs and consider strengthening scientific training and educational and research programmes, including such training in the developed countries and the strengthening of centres of excellence in developing countries. Countries could designate and strengthen a central unit to organize and coordinate technical cooperation, linking it with the priority-setting and resource allocation process.

Establish a review mechanism of technical cooperation in and related to technology transfer and know-how

7. Donors and recipients, the organizations and institutions of the United Nations system, and international public and private organizations should review the development of the cooperation process as it relates to technical cooperation, including that related to technology transfer and know-how activities linked to sustainable development. To facilitate this process, the Secretary-General could undertake, taking into account work carried out by the United Nations Development Programme and other organizations in preparation for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, consultations with developing countries, regional organizations, organizations and institutions of the United Nations system, including regional commissions, and multilateral and bilateral aid and environment agencies, with a view to further strengthening the endogenous capacities of countries and improving technical cooperation, including that related to the technology transfer and know-how process. The following aspects should be reviewed:

(a) Evaluation of existing capacity and capability for the integrated management of environment and development, including technical, technological and institutional capacities and capabilities, and facilities to assess the environmental impact of development projects; and evaluation of abilities to respond to and link up with needs for technical cooperation, including that related to technology transfer and know-how, of Agenda 21 and the global conventions on climate change and biological diversity;

(b) Assessment of the contribution of existing activities in technical cooperation, including that related to technology transfer and know-how, towards strengthening and building national capacity and capability for integrated environment and development management and assessment of the means of improving the quality of international technical cooperation, including that related to technology transfer and know-how;

(c) A strategy for shifting to a capacity- and capability-building thrust that recognizes the need for the operational integration of environment and development with longer-term commitments, having as a basis the set of national programmes established by each country, through a participatory process;

(d) Consideration of greater use of long-term cooperative arrangements between municipalities, non-governmental organizations, universities, training and research centres and business, public and private institutions with counterparts in other countries or within countries or regions. Programmes such as the Sustainable Development Networks of the United Nations Development Programme should be assessed in this regard;

(e) Strengthening of the sustainability of projects by including in the original project design consideration of environmental impacts, the costs of institution-building, human resource development and technology needs, as well as financial and organizational requirements for operation and maintenance;

(f) Improvement of technical cooperation, including that related to technology transfer and know-how and management processes, by giving greater attention to capacity- and capability-building as an integral part of sustainable development strategies for environment and development programmes both in country-related coordination processes, such as consultative groups and round tables, and in sectoral coordination mechanisms to enable developing countries to participate actively in obtaining assistance from different sources.

Enhance the expertise and collective contribution of the United Nations system for capacity- and capability-building initiatives

8. Organizations, organs, bodies and institutions of the United Nations system, together with other international and regional organizations and the public and private sectors, could, as appropriate, strengthen their joint activities in technical cooperation, including that related to technology transfer and know-how, in order to address linked environment and development issues and to promote coherence and consistency of action. Organizations could assist and reinforce countries, particularly least developed countries, upon request, on matters relating to national environmental and developmental policies, human resource development and fielding of experts, legislation, natural resources and environmental data.

9. The United Nations Development Programme, the World Bank and regional multilateral development banks, as part of their participation in national and regional coordination mechanisms, should assist in facilitating capacity- and capability-building at the country level, drawing upon the special expertise and operational capacity of the United Nations Environment Programme in the environmental field as well as of the specialized agencies, organizations of the United Nations system and regional and subregional organizations in their respective areas of competence. For this purpose the United Nations Development Programme should mobilize funding for capacity- and capability-building, utilizing its network of field offices and its broad mandate and experience in the field of technical cooperation, including that related to technology transfer and know-how. The United Nations Development Programme, together with these international organizations, should at the same time continue to develop consultative processes to enhance mobilization and coordination of funds from the international community for capacity- and capability-building, including the establishment of an appropriate database. These responsibilities may need to be accompanied by strengthening of the United Nations Development Programme's own capacities.

10. The national entity in charge of technical cooperation, with the assistance of the United Nations Development Programme resident representatives and the United Nations Environment Programme representatives, should establish a small group of key actors to steer the process, giving priority to the country's own strategies and priorities. The experience gained through existing planning exercises such as the national reports for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, national conservation strategies and environment action plans should be fully used and incorporated into a country-driven, participatory and sustainable development strategy. This should be complemented with information networks and consultations with donor organizations in order to improve coordination, as well as access to the existing body of scientific and technical knowledge and information available in institutions elsewhere.

Harmonize the delivery of assistance at the regional level

11. At the regional level, existing organizations should consider the desirability of improved regional and subregional consultative processes and round-table meetings to facilitate the exchange of data, information and experience in the implementation of Agenda 21. The United Nations Development Programme, building on the results of the regional surveys on capacity-building that those regional organizations carried out on the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development initiative, and in collaboration with existing regional, subregional or national organizations with potential for regional coordination, should provide a significant input for this purpose. The relevant national unit should establish a steering mechanism. A periodic review mechanism should be established among the countries of the region with the assistance of the appropriate relevant regional organizations and the participation of development banks, bilateral aid agencies and non-governmental organizations. Other possibilities are to develop national and regional research and training facilities building on existing regional and subregional institutions.

Means of implementation

[Financing and costs

12. The cost of bilateral expenditures to developing countries for technical cooperation, including that related to technology transfer and know-how, is about $15 billion, or about 25 per cent of total official development assistance. The implementation of Agenda 21 will require a more effective use of these funds and additional funding in key areas. [Specific funding requirements are included in each programme area. Support for the Secretary-General's consultative process will require approximately $1 million.]]

[13. As reflected in paragraph 9, there is a need for a new [funding mechanism coordinated by the United Nations Development Programme] to provide lead and catalytic funding to give effect to a major capacity-building initiative. Amounts suggested could be in the range of $300-$500 million per year, rising over five years to some $1 billion per year. This would include the establishment of a consultative group process that could be managed by the United Nations Development Programme and assisted by a technical advisory committee to mobilize funding from all sources for capacity- and capability-building.]